

Rebuilding a Resilient New Jersey Shore CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT SURVEY

The following describes the results of a survey of participants at the Rebuilding a Resilient New Jersey Shore conference held at Monmouth University on December 7, 2012. The conference was sponsored by Monmouth University’s Kislak Real Estate Institute, Monmouth University’s Urban Coast Institute, and New Jersey Future. The survey was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute, using questions that were also asked on a statewide public opinion survey of New Jersey residents.

A total of 141 conference attendees completed the survey. Most live in either Monmouth County (38%) or Ocean County (18%). Another 23% come from Central Jersey, 12% from North Jersey, and 7% from South Jersey. Just over 1-in-3 attendees (36%) live in a shore community and 12% own a shore business. Also, 12% report that their property was significantly damaged by Sandy. Four-in-ten (42%) identify their main affiliation as a professional in planning or a related field, 23% are in the non-profit sector, 21% are government employees, 12% elected or appointed officials, 12% from the academic world, 10% in business, and 6% in development or real estate.

Participants were asked to rate the importance of rebuilding the Jersey Shore so that it is ready for this summer’s tourism season. Four-in-ten (39%) rate this as very important, 49% somewhat important, and just 12% not important. The percentage of conference attendees who gave the highest rating of very important is 8 percentage points lower than the number of New Jersey residents (47%) who said the same in the statewide poll. Considering that an accelerated rebuilding schedule may also drive up costs, 63% of conference attendees prefer that rebuilding be done gradually to keep costs down. This is similar to the 67% of New Jersey residents who prefer a gradual approach to rebuilding if cost is a factor.

Among conference attendees, just 13% say that rebuilding should be accomplished this summer even if it drives those costs up. Another 24% say it depends, with some remarking that the pace of rebuilding would have to be weighed against any potential loss of tourism revenue.

	Conference attendees	New Jersey public *
<i>Importance of rebuilding shore by this summer</i>		
Very important	39%	47%
Somewhat important	49	34
Not important	12	18
<i>If accelerated rebuild means higher cost</i>		
Should still try to rebuild for this summer	13%	25%
Rebuild gradually to save costs	63	67
Depends	24	8

The survey also asked about participants' general willingness to see state tax dollars used for ten different aspects of the rebuilding effort. More than 9-in-10 conference attendees support using state taxes to restore wetlands and bays to better absorb surges and flooding (94%), upgrade utilities substations and electrical lines to be more storm resistant (94%), and upgrade rail transportation systems (93%). The results for these three questions are 14 to 16 points higher than support levels among the general public. It's also worth noting that at least 3-in-4 conference attendees say they "strongly support" using tax dollars for these efforts.

Between 6-in-10 and 8-in-10 conference attendees support using state tax dollars to assist flooded businesses in northern non-shore areas (82%), rebuild boardwalks and other beach amenities (79%), assist flooded residents in northern non-shore areas (74%), rebuild shore businesses (70%), and replace coastal sand that was washed away by the storm (63%). These results are basically in line with the findings of the statewide general population poll. It is important to note that only about 3-in-10 conference attendees give any of these efforts the highest rating of "strongly support."

The survey also found that half (50%) of conference attendees support using tax money to help undamaged homeowners in high risk areas upgrade their own properties. This is slightly higher than the 39% of New Jersey residents who feel this way, but it's worth noting that only 19% of conference attendees strongly support this allocation of state resources. Finally, just 25% of conference attendees support – including just 5% who "strongly support" – using state tax dollars to rebuild private homes down the shore. This is even lower than the 40% of New Jersey residents who feel this way.

<i>Support using state tax dollars for:</i>	Conference attendees	New Jersey public *
Restore wetlands and bays	94%	80%
Make power utility upgrades	94%	79%
Upgrade rail systems	93%	77%
Assist flooded northern urban businesses	82%	71%
Rebuild boardwalks, beach amenities	79%	76%
Assist flooded northern urban residents	74%	78%
Rebuild shore businesses	70%	68%
Replace sand	63%	72%
Help homeowners in high risk areas stormproof	50%	39%
Rebuild private shore homes	25%	40%

The survey also asked about support levels for seven general planning proposals regarding the rebuilding effort. Nearly all conference attendees (98%) support requiring stricter storm resistant building codes in areas affected by the storm – including 88% who "strongly support" this proposal. Support from the general public is nearly as high at 87% overall.

Nearly 9-in-10 support allowing towns to impose a short term building moratorium in high risk areas (87%) and requiring beachfront homeowners to allow dunes or seal walls in front of their property before they can rebuild (86%). About 7-in-10 attendees

“strongly support” these two proposals. Conference participant support for both these items is 18 points higher than the general population survey results, although public support for both registers at a significant two-thirds.

More than 8-in-10 conference participants also support proposals to allow state regulators to determine which areas can or cannot be rebuilt based on storm risk (84%), to use Blue Acres funds to buy out private property in high risk areas (84%), and to create a Coastal Commission that would coordinate shore planning and rebuilding (82%). Just over half of attendees “strongly support” these three proposals. Support levels for the state determining rebuild zones and creating a planning commission are 10 to 18 points higher among conference attendees than Garden State residents, but public support is still at or above two-thirds for these proposals. However, support for Blue Acres buyouts is notably higher, in fact twice as high, among conference attendees (84%) than it is among the general public in New Jersey (43%).

Finally, just over half of conference attendees (55%) support a program that would continue to replenish sand along the coastline every few years. This includes just 30% who would “strongly support” such an effort. In this instance, conference attendee support is lower than support among New Jersey’s general public (74%).

<i>Support the following proposals:</i>	Conference attendees	New Jersey public *
Stricter building codes in affected areas	98%	87%
Short-term building moratorium	87%	69%
Homes rebuilt only with dunes or sea walls	86%	68%
State determines which areas to be re-built	84%	66%
“Blue Acres” property buyouts	84%	43%
State coastal commission to coordinate planning	82%	72%
Replenish with sand every few years	55%	74%

* Source: **Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll**, “[Sandy's Impact on New Jersey](http://www.monmouth.edu/polling)” (12/10/12). Visit www.monmouth.edu/polling for more details.

Note: The full conference survey results can be found on the following pages.

For more information about this survey or the Monmouth University Polling Institute’s ongoing efforts to track Sandy’s impact and recovery, please contact:

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Rebuilding a Resilient New Jersey Shore

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Dec. 7, 2012
(n=141)

Do you support or oppose using state tax dollars for the following purposes:

	<u>Strongly Support</u>	<u>Somewhat Support</u>	<u>Somewhat Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>Depends</u>
Rebuilding boardwalks and other public amenities down the shore	36%	43%	8%	4%	10%
Rebuilding businesses down the shore	28%	42%	7%	10%	12%
Rebuilding private homes down the shore	5%	20%	27%	28%	20%
Providing assistance to residents in cities and towns in northern New Jersey who were damaged by flooding	29%	45%	11%	3%	13%
Providing assistance to businesses in cities and towns in northern New Jersey that were damaged by flooding	33%	49%	6%	4%	8%
Making power utility upgrades to substations and electrical lines to be more storm resistant	83%	11%	4%	2%	1%
Upgrading rail transportation systems to make them more storm resistant	74%	19%	3%	2%	2%
Replacing sand along the coast line that was washed away by Sandy	35%	28%	16%	7%	14%
Helping homeowners in high risk areas with little or no damage from this storm upgrade their properties to be more resistant in future storms	19%	31%	21%	14%	14%
Restoring existing wetlands and bays to better absorb storm surges and flooding	81%	13%	2%	0%	4%

How important is it to you that damaged areas of the Jersey Shore are ready to receive visitors this coming summer – very important, somewhat important, or not important?

- 39% Very important
- 49% Somewhat important
- 12% Not important

It may cost more to fully rebuild boardwalks, businesses, and other amenities by this summer. Should shore towns do all they can to rebuild in time for summer even if it costs more or should they rebuild gradually over the next few years in order to save on those costs?

- 13% Rebuild in time for summer even if it costs more
- 63% Rebuild gradually to save on costs
- 24% Depends

Do you support or oppose the following proposals:

	<u>Strongly Support</u>	<u>Somewhat Support</u>	<u>Somewhat Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>Depends</u>
Allowing beachfront homeowners to rebuild only if they agree to have dunes or sea walls placed in front of their property, even if it blocks their view of the ocean	71%	15%	1%	2%	11%
Allowing state regulators to determine which areas along the coast can or cannot be re-built based on storm risk	54%	30%	4%	5%	7%
Using government funds from the “Blue Acres” program to buy private property in high risk areas of the shore	59%	25%	8%	3%	5%
Continuing to replenish the coast line with sand every few years	30%	25%	14%	14%	16%
Creating a state coastal commission to coordinate planning and rebuilding along the shore	55%	27%	6%	4%	8%
Giving towns the right to impose a short term moratorium on rebuilding in high risk areas	68%	19%	4%	4%	5%
Requiring stricter storm-resistant building codes in areas affected by the storm	88%	10%	2%	0%	0%

What county do you live in?

- 38% Monmouth
- 18% Ocean
- 2% Atlantic-Cape May
- 9% Mercer
- 5% South Jersey
- 14% Central Jersey
- 12% North Jersey
- 2% Outside New Jersey

Do any of the following apply to you?

- 36% Live full-time in a shore community
- 31% Own a home in a shore community
- 12% Own a business in a shore community
- 12% Home, business or other property was significantly damaged by storm

What is your primary professional or civic affiliation? *[Multiple responses accepted]*

- 12% Elected or appointed government official
- 21% Government employee
- 23% Nonprofit sector
- 42% Professional in planning, architecture, engineering, or related field
- 6% Development or real estate
- 12% Academic
- 3% Attorney
- 10% Business
- 3% Other